

Be Prudent

(Go To Meeting)

Tom Fannin—January 27, 2024

Today I want to talk about *being prudent!* Being prudent is something all of us in the Church of God need to be thinking about.

So, I'll give you a simple definition of *prudent*. It means ***acting with or showing care or thought for the future!*** We apply this to God's people or the saints at the Church.

- Are we doing this?
- Are we showing concern, thought, care for the future?

Because certainly God has in His Word and through His Spirit revealed to us His Plan and His Purpose for the future. Another question maybe to ask is:

- Is God seeing us being prudent?
- Is He seeing this trait in us?

It's obviously and definitely required of all of us that we do be prudent.

Proverbs 22:3: "**A prudent one foresees the evil and hides himself,** but the thoughtless plow ahead and are punished."

We'll start here by maybe thinking about this is thinking, this is thought as we define prudence, something our minds are on. Then it shows action in what we're doing in our lives.

Now, there's basically the same verse is written again in:

Proverbs 27:12: "**A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself,** but **the simple** pass on and are punished." *Certainly we see in the world today that:*

- people are just passing on
- they're thoughtless
- they continue on
- they're plowing ahead in this world
- they're not being prudent
- they're not paying attention to what's coming

But all of us in the Church, now that's different. We shouldn't be simple, we shouldn't be thoughtless or just plowing ahead. *We should be prudent in these things because we know what's coming!*

Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish; **but happy is he who keeps the Law.**"

So we have a vision of God's Plan and His purpose for us. We need to keep that vision in front of us, ***that's part of being prudent!***

But as we see here, what's tied in, "...happy is he who keeps the Law." It brings us confidence. And the Law we're talking about here is the Law Christ showed us how to keep.

We know it's written upon our heart, it's written upon our mind, *through the circumcision of the heart!* It's a *spiritual law* for us that we keep, but it brings us happiness. It goes along with the vision that we need to have, all of us.

So, as we think about it here, ***the prudent hide themselves!***

- Where do we hide ourselves?
- How do we hide ourselves?
- Is it time to hide?

And the answer to all that is, yes, we should be hiding; we should hide ourselves. ***We hide ourselves with God and in God!***

Psalms 119:114: "You are my **hiding place and my shield;** I hope in Your Word."

So, speaking of God, ***God is the place we need to go hide and be with!*** The hope we have is in His word, as we read there earlier about the vision; so, we need to have vision. We hope in God's Word, the Truth!

Verse 115: "Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according to Your Word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up, and I shall be safe; and I will always have respect unto Your statutes. You have rejected all those who go astray from Your statutes, for their deceit is useless" (vs 115-118).

So, again, part of what we need to be doing is **hiding ourselves right now in God** and continually doing that.

Psalms 32:6: "For this *reason* let every Godly one pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall encircle me with songs of deliverance. Selah" (vs 6-7)—*think on this! God is the One Who will hide us and take care of us!*

Verse 8: "*You said,* 'I will instruct you and

teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye shall be upon you. Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you” (vs 8-9).

So, we’re not to be like the horse, they don’t have understanding. But all of us in the Church striving to be prudent, ***we have understanding that’s been given to us!*** This is what God wants us to be like:

- to come to Him
- to hide in Him
- to hide in His Truth
- to hide in His hope
- to hide in His way

Not be like it talks about here with the horse! The horse has to be guided with the bit in its mouth, to move forward, to move back, to go side to side.

God doesn’t want a relationship like that. He doesn’t want us to be hiding ourselves in Him in this manner, ***but through understanding!***

Isaiah 55:6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.”

Brethren, it’s safe to say right now that God can be found for all of us. God is near to all of us, and He wants us to come to Him.

We need to be mindful of the opportunities we have right now. ***To be prudent***, because God is near to us. Will that time change at some point? *Well, it probably will!* At some point, time will move on and we’ll progress into a different time. But right now, we have a lot of opportunities. We need to take advantage of those.

Verse 7: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

So, yeah, we need to put aside a lot of the things that aren’t in line with God and His way and His thinking, ***and return to Him***, continually.

Isaiah 56:4: “For thus says the LORD, ‘To the eunuchs who ¹**keep My Sabbaths**...[plural, meaning the weekly Sabbath and also the annual Holy Day Sabbaths] ...and ²**choose things that please Me** and ³**take hold of My covenant**.”

Certainly, we in God’s Church have taken hold of that covenant through baptism.

Verse 5: “Even to them will I give within My house and within My walls a place and a name

better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”

This is what we have to look forward to and what we’re a part of, a place with God in His house. Again, a blessing for us. This is part of being a part of God and hiding ourselves in God, which we should be doing.

One thing I’ll make note of now is the things we’re just reading here and describing, ***IF*** we’re doing these things, drawing close to God, seeking God, keeping His Law and His Word, ***THEN*** this should give us comfort. A lot of the things we know are coming up, are going to be coming to pass, we don’t have to be worrying about.

Psalm 27:1: “The LORD is my Light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid; though war should rise against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I have desired from the LORD, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple, for in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me upon a Rock” (vs 1-5).

That’s very encouraging, isn’t it? ***If*** our minds are on God and Jesus Christ first, and the things that we should be doing to please Them, and our desire ***to be hidden in God***, which ***the prudent hide, then God hides us!***

He’ll make sure whatever situation we run into, whatever may be coming, ***that we’re hidden with Him!*** So, it works both ways, our effort to hide ourselves in God, and then knowing and having the confidence that, yes, God will hide us and take care of us.

- How near is our salvation?
- How near is it?

Here’s what Paul says; Romans 13:11: “Now consider this, knowing the time...”

- Do we think that way?
- Do we know the time?
- Do we know what’s ahead?
- Do we know what God requires of us?

We do, all of us in the Church!

“...that *it is* already *the* hour *that* we should be roused out of sleep; because our salvation *is* nearer now than when we first believed” (v 11).

So, every day you can say that our salvation is nearer than it ever has been. From the time where all of us, whenever that was, we first believed.

Verse 12: “The night is almost over and the day is drawing near; therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk decently, as in *the* day: not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and emulation” (vs 12-13). *God wants us to put these things off.*

Verse 14: “But *let us* put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make any allowance for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” ***This is part of being prudent:***

- being aroused out of sleep
- being ready
- putting off things we need to be putting off

and putting in and putting on Jesus Christ!

The prudent shouldn't be sleeping. We know this is something that Christ continually warned against for all of us to be careful about; that we don't find ourselves asleep, *but watching!* We're continually instructed throughout God's Word to be watching.

Matthew 24:42—*Christ says here:* “Watch, therefore, because you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming.” ***We know Christ is coming!***

We know in the Church throughout the years, many have gone to sleep with this hope and this known fact that Christ will be coming. We know as it talks about there in Isaiah, sometimes the righteous are taken from the evil that is coming.

But nonetheless, we know all of us that are alive, we know there is a time when Christ will be coming. But it goes on to say here,

Verse 43: “But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching...”

Certainly when it comes to each one of us, and we'll bring this out in a moment, ***we are the house of God's Spirit. We have a responsibility to watch the house!***

“...and would not have allowed his house to be broken into” (v 43).

That's something we all need to be mindful of, that our houses don't get broken into. You know, I'll just say this, that the thief is always watching. We know who the thief is: *Satan and this world!*

We've got to be mindful of that continually, because once our houses get broken into, we don't know what kind of loss can be suffered from that.

Something to keep in mind that the thief is always watching the houses, so we have to be guarding and watching out for that, whatever it may be.

Verse 44: “Therefore, you also be ready. For the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his lord has set over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed *is* that servant... [a faithful and wise servant who is doing these things, using wisdom, part of being prudent] ...whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing. Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his property. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming’” (vs 44-48).

The ones who are simple, the ones who continue to just plow ahead. They're not considering the time. ***They're not hiding themselves in God,*** as we've talked about already.

Verse 49: “And shall begin to beat *his* fellow servants...”

- Do we beat our fellow servants?
- Those of the household with God, our brothers and sisters in Christ?

or

- Do we have love for one another as we're shown to have through Christ?

“...and to eat and drink with the drunken...” (v 49). *You could say this is with this world and the cares of this world!*

Verse 50: “The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vs 50-51).

- We don't want to be a part of this, none of us do we, so we know what we need to be doing.
- What do we watch?
- What's most important for us to watch?

Well, Christ tells us what that is back in Luke 21!

I'll say this: within the Churches of God, I see a lot of the brethren that get involved in what I call ‘watching the world’ and all the things that are of this world. We know who the ‘god of this world’ is and what's behind these things. A lot of deception, a lot of corruption. It's easy to get focused on watching all the things that are going on in the world. But here's what Christ says we should be doing.

Luke 21:34—*Jesus says:* “Watch yourselves...” *That is the most important thing for all of us to be doing, brethren! We need to watch*

ourselves! Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. We need to watch ourselves.

“...lest your hearts be preoccupied with high living and drinking and *the* cares of *this* life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare it shall come upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth. Watch, therefore, *and* pray at all times that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (vs 34-36).

That’s a key point for all of us to remember that we need to be watching ourselves. We don’t want to be broken into.

- What are some signs that we aren’t being prudent?
- That we aren’t being prudent, considering or putting some thought into what’s coming, taking action, whatever’s necessary?
- What are some things we can see within ourselves that may show that we’re not being prudent?

First of all, a love of this world

- Do we find ourselves in love with this world and the things of this world?

It’s easy to do because there are many things in this world that are enjoyable and pleasing and also enticing. We can easily get caught up in the things of this world.

Let’s see here what it says in 1-John 2. When you think about the world and all the things the world has to offer, there are so many things in this world that are easy for us to get caught up in. Certainly, we don’t want to be caught up in the evils of this world, but there’s a lot of things in this world that are that are also pleasing and enjoyable. But if we’re not careful, we can even find ourselves getting too focused and caught up into those things.

1-John 2:15: “Do not love the world, nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, because everything that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever” (vs 15-17).

We know where we abide; ***we abide in God!*** So yeah, there are a lot of things in this world that are enjoyable, but we have to be careful ourselves to not get too caught up in this world and focused in this world and what’s going on, *and then be in love with it.*

We need to find ourselves being in love with God and Christ in Their way and looking forward to the Kingdom!

We need to have separation from this world, and sometimes that’s difficult. So, we need to be separating physically and sometimes, too—when you think about this—emotionally, because sometimes we get emotionally tied into this world again in our thoughts. We need to be mindful of that. That’s a sign that maybe we’re not being prudent when we find ourselves getting too caught up into this world.

Each of us have to examine ourselves to see where we’re at with this. But if you find yourself tied into the world a lot—whether it be physically or emotionally—you may have to think through that and work on getting away from that. Each one of us know, don’t we?

Another thing that maybe shows that we aren’t being prudent is a lukewarmness to our approach to God being comfortable, you might say.

We’ll read back in Rev. 3 about the Church that’s being warned about being this way. That’s the Laodicean.

Revelation 3:14: “And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth” (vs 14-16).

Verse 17: “For you say... [and this is what we need to pay attention here to] ...‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’... [but God lets him know.] ...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see” (vs 17-18).

Something bringing out here for us to be careful about ***being spiritually prudent!***

We find ourselves being lukewarm, being comfortable, and certainly we’ve lived in this age in this time where we—especially in the nation, the United States—a lot of blessings, a lot of nice things. It’s with all these things, it’s easy to think ‘I’m rich and don’t have need of anything; all my needs are met every day.’ And become lukewarm toward God and Jesus Christ.

We all know ourselves where we are some of these things and we just need to examine ourselves. One other thing, too, that maybe shows that we aren't being prudent, *is the lack of daily prayer and study*. Christ talked earlier about watching ourselves, and the need for prayer.

If we don't have daily prayer and daily study and make an effort to do that, we're not being prudent. I know when we speak about prayer and study, that's talked about a lot, the need for prayer and study. How can we say that we're prudent if we're not doing this? *Because prayer and study gives us what we need to be able to hide ourselves in God and have that understanding!*

Prayer and study instruct us. It's God instructing us through reading His Word. He's talking to us in prayer, *the Spirit within us crying out to God!* Uttering things maybe we don't understand at times. But prayer and study is so necessary daily. We have to have it.

If we find ourselves not doing these things daily and letting up on these things, *we're not being prudent*, because the prudent will be doing these things.

So, just some things that came to mind for the message here that may be signs that we're not being prudent. *Being prudent* as we move forward, *is also an understanding of how powerful the deception is that's coming; knowing that.*

There is a mystery at work right now. I talked about Thessalonians; it's a mystery of lawlessness that's working in this world. And at times, too, we see it working within the Church.

Matthew 24:23: :Then if anyone says to you, "Behold, here *is* the Christ," or, "*He is there*," do not believe *it*. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (vs 23-24).

So this deception that's out there and we know who's behind it. The deceiving is so much that it's even there to deceive the elect. Satan and this mystery of lawlessness that way, is at work and would like to deceive the elect—*us!*

Verse 25: "Behold, I have foretold *it* to you."

That's powerful. Right there is this Christ is talking to all of us today. "...I've told it to you." So, we all know.

Verse 26: "Therefore, if they say to you, '*Come and see!* He is in the wilderness'; do not go forth. '*Come and see!* *He is* in the secret chambers';

do not believe *it.*'"

So, rather than we just have to be mindful. That's why I'm bringing this out again of the deception, the powerful deception. Sometimes there are those within the Church who bring deception to us.

More things we know will come forth where we've been warned about that and God's Word. So, again, just something for all of us to be mindful of at all times.

How important is it when we talk about being proven that we use God's Spirit, that He's put within all of us when we entered in the covenant? *Well, it's very important!*

I want to bring up an example about someone that had God's Spirit and it was used.

Gen. 41—we're going to be talking about Joseph. We won't read the whole chapter, but kind of the background before we enter into this chapter is:

- we know that Pharaoh had a dream
- he saw these different ears of corn
- he saw that the cattle, some were healthy and some weren't, some were thin
- he wanted this dream interpreted

Joseph was able to do that for him, revealing to him there would be an upcoming time or there would be seven years of plenty. Then there would be seven years to follow that. So, Joseph was able to reveal to him what this dream was and what it meant.

Genesis 41:33—Joseph is talking: "Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look for a man who is discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt."

So Joseph is giving Pharaoh some advice here about what he needs to do; he needs to find somebody that's discreet and wise. But that person over the land, let them be in charge to guide what's coming.

Verse 34: "Let Pharaoh act, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. That food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt, so that the land does not perish through the famine.' And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants" (vs 34-37).

Verse 38: "And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find any man like this *in* whom the Spirit of

God *is*?.... [Pharaoh recognized this] ...And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has shown you all this, no one *is* as discreet and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall obey your word. Only in the throne will I be greater than you’” (vs 38-40).

This is to me. Oh, so he’s encouraging a read this being discreet, being wise that comes from God’s Spirit and God’s Spirit within Joseph.

God worked it out or he would be over Egypt and prepare for the future for his for his brothers and his father to come and all that followed after that with Israel. So, we think about this.

It’s good for us to **remember we have God’s Spirit within us!** I’ll say this: There is some teaching about time-cycles and maybe seven years of lean that this world’s been in or this nation’s been in or seven years of famine that could be coming seven years of plenty.

Certainly God does work in time-cycles and God has dates and appointed times. That’s very, very true. Sometimes God—through His Word—has appointed times right down to the hour. But sometimes we don’t want to get caught up in some things that maybe have to do with times and cycles.

But what we do need to understand and be clear about is that God has given us His Spirit. And I think that’s the point here.

- it’s a Spirit that’s discrete
- it’s a Spirit that’s wise

where we do have understanding to be able to know what to do and what’s coming! I think that’s the important point here.

Us being like Joseph, having that same Spirit to lead us and the guide us to know what we should be doing. So an important point here: just like Joseph was shown by God; God also shows us and reveals us to us, and He will continue to as time goes on. That’s where we need to have our hope and faith in that God will be working and helping us through His Spirit.

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.”

Certainly God’s Spirit leads us, all of us. We all in our lives can give examples where we know that God led us and helped us through His Spirit, the inner working. The Spirit plays another part, too. remember what Paul told Timothy:

2-Timothy 1:6: “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of

sound-mindedness” (vs 6-7).

Brethren, the point here about us being prudent is realizing the Spirit that we have within us allows us and helps us to be prudent in what we’re doing.

Again, considering the future, thinking upon the future, and taking action where we need to. The ability to know that it leads us, **and we hide ourselves in God** through it.

1-Thessalonians 5:1: “Now then, concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, there is no need that I write to you; for you yourselves understand perfectly that the Day of *the* Lord will come exactly as a thief *comes* by night” (vs 1-2).

We’ve already covered quite a bit of Scripture that tie right into this.

Verse 3: “For when they say, ‘Peace and security’...”

And, boy, you see a lot of that in the world, that kind of thinking! Though **we know** what’s coming upon this world.

“...then sudden destruction will come upon them, as travail *comes* upon a woman who is with child; and they shall by no means escape” (v 3).

We talked about that earlier, as we see what this world does. It’s just plowing right ahead. It just says things are going to go on, things are going to be fine, there’s not going to be any ramifications, everything’s going to be great. There’s going to be a solution and a fix to everything. But **we know** it’s not going to be that way.

Verse 4: “But you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day *of the Lord* should overtake you as a thief.... [that’s not who we are, as God’s people; we’re not this way] ...*For* you are all children of *the* Light and children of *the* day; we are not of *the* night, nor of *the* darkness” (vs 4-5).

That’s not who we are, those of us who are led by the Spirit of God. We’re God’s children.

Verse 6: “So then, we should not sleep, as others *do*; but we should watch, and we should be sober. For those who are sleeping sleep in *the* night, and those who are drunken get drunk in *the* night. But we who are of *the* day should be sober, having put on *the* breastplate of faith and love, and *for* a helmet *the* hope of salvation, because God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 6-9).

So yeah, we shouldn’t be concerned. As we’ve talked about, doing the things God requires us

to do, we don't have to worry about the thief coming into us. We'll be fine.

Verse 10: "Who died for us, so that whether we *remain* alive *until He comes* or we *fall* asleep *before that day*, together we may live *forever* with Him. Therefore, encourage one another, and edify one another, even as you are already doing" (vs 10-11).

Brethren, that's so important for all of us that have this understanding. In this same calling:

- to help one another
- to encourage one another
- to edify and build up one another
- sometimes to correct one another in love
 - we all want to be prudent
 - we all know what's coming
 - we don't want to be simple
 - we don't want to just plow ahead

But all of us together want to ***hide ourselves in the Lord!*** So brethren, ***let's all strive to think about this calling that we have, this salvation we have to look forward to! And all of us strive to be prudent!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 22:3
- 2) Proverbs 27:12
- 3) Proverbs 29:18
- 4) Psalm 119:114-118
- 5) Psalm 32:6-9
- 6) Isaiah 55:6-7
- 7) Isaiah 56:4-5
- 8) Psalm 27:1-5
- 9) Romans 13:11-14
- 10) Matthew 24:42-51
- 11) Luke 21:34-36
- 12) 1-John 2:15-17
- 13) Revelation 3:14-18
- 14) Matthew 24:23-26
- 15) Genesis 41:33-40
- 16) Romans 8:14
- 17) 2-Timothy 1:6-7
- 18) 1-Thessalonians 5:1-11

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